

Notes.

THOMAS GWYN EMPEY ELGER.—The announcement of the death of Mr. Elger has been received with feelings of the deepest regret. The Lunar Section of the Association, of which he has been the Director for so long, will keenly feel the great loss which it has sustained. On December 29 last, Mr. Elger was seized with an attack of paralysis in the left side, but a few days later he was thought to be fairly on the way towards recovery. The paralysis had passed off, but had left a state of weakness, which it was hoped might be overcome. On Saturday, January 9, however, the patient succumbed to failure of the heart's action. Mr. Elger was born in 1838, and educated at Bedford Grammar School until he was 13 years of age. He subsequently entered at King's College, London, where he studied mathematics under Prof. de Morgan. After completing his course here, Mr. Elger adopted the profession of engineer. His work was by no means confined to astronomy, although it is more particularly his connexion with this branch of science that renders his career of interest to the Association. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in February 1871. He was one of the early Members of the Liverpool Astronomical Society, and was for several years Director of its Lunar Section, and at one time President of the Society. He joined this Association immediately on its inception, and from the first undertook, with his accustomed thoroughness, the direction of the Section devoted to that study which he had made so peculiarly his own—selenography. His name will always be associated chiefly with lunar astronomy, to which he devoted himself and his telescopes. His early training as a draughtsman was of great service to him in his work as a selenographer. His minute descriptions and drawings of the lunar surface have for many years formed a valuable contribution to the "Observatory" magazine and to astronomy generally.

In 1895 he published a book entitled "The Moon: a Full Description and Map of its Principal Physical Features." It is full of interesting detail. Perhaps the achievement most characteristic of the author is the clearly drawn map, which is also published separately. It depicts the moon's surface drawn on a scale of 18 inches to the diameter, and shows every named formation, together with most other features of interest, including the rill systems. As an indication of the painstaking labour involved in the preparation of this map, it may be remarked that Mr. Elger had recourse to photographs and enlargements taken at Lick Observatory and the Royal Observatory of Brussels, the exquisite heliogravures of Prof. Weinek, Director of the Imperial Observatory of Prague, the photographic work at the Paris Observatory, and numerous sketches by experts at home and abroad, besides his own observations. Several years before, Mr. Elger wrote the lunar chapters for two important works, "Celestial Objects for Common Telescopes," by the late Rev. Prebendary Webb, and "Astronomy for Amateurs," by Mr. Westwood Oliver.

On several occasions Mr. Elger took part in the construction of railways in the north of England. He also assisted in the construction of the Menai Bridge and the Underground Railway between King's Cross and Edgware Road, and when he went into practice on his own responsibility he acted as engineer for a firm of contractors who were engaged in laying railroads in Denmark, until this work was stopped by the outbreak of war over the Schleswig-Holstein question in 1864. It was shortly after this time that he set up his first observatory in Caldwell Street, Bedford, and when he removed to Manor Cottage, Kempston, he also erected an observatory in the garden, containing a reflector by Calver of $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches aperture, and a 4-in. refractor by Cook.

His work occupied him until the time of his last illness. Quite recently his Report as Director of the Lunar Section has been received, and his "Selenographical Notes" appear in the "Observatory" for January.

The large number of eminent visitors who attended the funeral, which took place on Tuesday, January 12, testified to the esteem in which the deceased was held. He leaves a widow and two young sons, for whom the deepest sympathy is felt in their bereavement.

Personal Notes :—The Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society was awarded to Prof. E. E. Barnard, at the Annual Meeting of the Society on February 12.

The first award of the Hannah Jackson-Gwilt Gift of the same Society was made at the same time to Mr. Lewis Swift.

The distinguished Berlin astronomer, Prof. Dr. Arthur Auwers, has received from the German Emperor a gold medal for his services to science (*Nat.*, p. 231).

Dr. Hermann Davis, of Columbia University, has undertaken, with the co-operation of his wife, to re-reduce all Piazzi's star observations.

Lord Kelvin and Prof. S. Newcomb have been elected honorary members of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, and Lord Rayleigh has been made a corresponding member.

Prof. Asaph Hall and Prof. Lewis Boss have consented to be Associate Editors, with Dr. Chandler, of the "Astronomical Journal" (*Obs.*, p. 114).

Prof. Dr. Paul Harzer, Director of the Observatory at Gotha, has been appointed Director of the Observatory at Kiel, and professor of astronomy in the university there, in succession to the late Prof. Krüger. The Gotha Observatory was founded at the beginning of this century, and has numbered among its directors Encke, Hansen, Krüger, Seeliger, and Becker.

M. Maurice Loewy has been appointed to the Directorship of the Paris National Observatory, rendered vacant by the death of M. Tisserand. M. Loewy has been for many years a member of the staff of the Paris Observatory, and previous to his new appointment held the position of Sous-Directeur. He is also a member of the Bureau des Longitudes, and has taken an active part in several longitude observations. He has published catalogues of stars, besides many investigations on subjects of geometrical astronomy.

Dr. Wilhelm Valentiner, who has charge of the Karlsruhe Observatory, has been appointed Professor of Astronomy in the University of Heidelberg.

M. Faye, whose contributions to astronomy and meteorology are of world-wide renown, was elected a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences in January 1847. In honour of his jubilee, at the meeting of the Academy on Monday, January 25, M. Chatin, the new President, delivered an eloquent tribute to a life devoted to the advancement of science, and enumerated his most notable achievements. At the close he presented M. Faye with a gold medal, representing the astronomer's effigy surrounded by an inscription affirming the pride of his colleagues in his friendship, and their admiration for his work. He was made the recipient of further honours at a dinner at the Grand Hotel, presided over by M. Janssen, when he received from General Billot, Minister of War, the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, bestowed upon him by special decree of the President of the Republic (*Nat.*, p. 298).

Notices of the Association.

The next Meeting of the Association will be held in the Botanical Theatre of University College, Gower Street, on Wednesday, February 24, at 5 o'clock p.m.

The following Paper has been received for the Meeting :—

“Third Preliminary Report of the Mars Section,” by the Director.

A lecture will be delivered by Mr. H. Dennis Taylor, F.R.A.S., on the “Evolution of the Telescope,” illustrated by lantern slides.

The East of Scotland Branch.

The First Meeting of the East of Scotland Branch of the Association was held in the City Observatory, Calton Hill, Edinburgh, on Saturday evening, 23rd January 1897, at 7 p.m. Mr. Peck, the President, in the chair. There was an attendance of about 40 Members and friends.

The ordinary business being disposed of, and nine names proposed for membership, the President explained the causes of the delay in holding the first Meeting, first, owing to the necessary formalities which had to be gone through with the parent Association, and then his serious illness, which necessitated putting off the Meeting until after the new year. After wishing the Branch every success and prosperity he gave a short description of the parent Association, dwelling especially on the importance of the various observing Sections, one or other of which he strongly advised the Members to join. He then invited the Members to inspect the Observatory buildings and instruments, and the sky being clear various celestial objects were examined by the telescopes, a very enjoyable practical evening being spent. Tea and coffee were very kindly provided by Mrs. Peck.

The above report came to hand too late for insertion in the proper part of the “Journal.”